



## **Parking Advisory Committee**

Date: January 19, 2022

Time: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

### **Minutes**

In Attendance: Daniel Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Mike Rademacher, Melissa Laube, Corey Rateau, Julia Mirak, Phyllis Marshall, John Hurd.

#### **1. Greetings and introductions, notice regarding online meetings.**

Daniel Amstutz explained that the Committee is holding a virtual meeting as allowed by state law to continue to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Governor Baker had signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. The provisions of this Executive Order have been extended by the Legislature. Amstutz confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

#### **2. Approval of the minutes for the December 20, 2021 meeting.**

Amstutz noted the minutes from the last meeting were unfinished and the committee would skip this item.

#### **3. Vote: Recommendation to Update the PBD Geographic Boundaries.**

Amstutz reiterated the discussion from the previous meeting noting that the current boundaries of the Parking Benefits District (PBD) does not include areas of Arlington Center that are of interest to the committee for making improvements with PBD funds. The Select Board would need to approve these changes. The expansion proposal includes expanding the district to the following locations:

- i. Both sides of Mystic Street from Mass Ave to Chestnut Street
- ii. Both sides of Chestnut Street from Mystic Street to Medford Street
- iii. Franklin Street from Mass Ave to Broadway

- iv. Broadway from Franklin Street to Webster Street
- v. Include any intersections with the above locations

Chestnut Street has come up as a significant safety concern for pedestrians over the last couple years. The committee has discussed improving the medians on Mystic Street. Broadway from Franklin Street to Webster Street now has parking meters. This proposal was brought to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in the fall and they supported this change. Amstutz showed a map with the expansion locations and asked if there were any additional questions or discussion before voting on the item.

Mike Rademacher moved to recommend the changes to the PBD geographic area to the Select Board. Julia Mirak seconded the motion. The PAC voted unanimously to recommend the changes to the Select Board.

**4. Vote: FY2023 PBD Fund Projects Recommendation.**

Amstutz explained that although parking revenues have fluctuated significantly over the last two years due to COVID-19, \$200,000 is available for programming in Town FY2023, above and beyond fixed expenses and other operating expenses. The continuation of the pandemic and the lower-than-historic revenues drive uncertainties about future allocations to discrete PBD projects. Projects can include transportation projects for walking and bicycling, public space improvements, and other eligible projects as outlined in state law. Given the uncertainties of the pandemic, the goal is to provide flexibility in case severe revenue shortages come up again and to prioritize projects for funding next year.

Amstutz listed the following proposed projects with costs for funding in FY2023:

- a. Seasonal plantings in Arlington Center - \$20,000
- b. Sidewalk snow clearance around meters - \$10,000
- c. Advance Chestnut Street pedestrian safety and complete streets improvements (design and/or construction) - \$50,000
- d. Additional public space improvements including Russell Common Lot (i.e, lighting, landscaping, beautification) - \$50,000
- e. Sidewalk design and repair in Arlington Center - \$45,000
- f. Railroad Lot Bluebikes station permanent installation - \$25,000

Amstutz noted these projects were all discussed at the last meeting, although for this meeting he has proposed expense numbers to each of the projects. He noted that the cost numbers are meant to be order-of-magnitude estimates and could leverage other funding beyond the PBD. He discussed details of several of the projects for the discussion. The

current costs associated with the projects adds up to \$200,000. Discussion questions around costs, project details, priorities, and other project ideas were presented.

Mirak asked if Rademacher had been able to determine cost estimates for items like landscaping that had been discussed at the last meeting. Rademacher noted he was waiting on information on putting outlets on light poles, which was one of the previous requests. For the landscaping there isn't a clear scope on what needs to be done so it is hard to price that. Items around making changes to medians may be better done through a larger repaving project. Mass Ave near Broadway Plaza is not currently on the repaving schedule for next year. Mirak suggested getting a consultant to look at the landscaping. Amstutz noted the proposed funding amount could get some level of design completed as well as some implementation as well. Mirak asked for information about a landscaped area in the Russell Common Lot in front of the adjacent residences and if that can be improved if it is on Town property.

Amstutz noted that Adam Chapdelaine had entered the meeting and asked about how much detail the PBD projects need to be for the Finance Committee and Town Meeting. Chapdelaine noted that the level of detail that has been provided in the past matches what has been presented today. Mirak said she hoped the projects funded would go to implement projects that people could see and produce results. Chapdelaine noted that the Chestnut Street safety project was a high-priority project of the Select Board and was on its way to producing significant changes this year. Amstutz noted that the funds for sidewalk repair could be used as seed funding for a larger project or focus on a particular section such as the sidewalk next to the east side of Whittemore Park between Mass Ave and the Russell Common Parking lot. Other projects proposed here do have discrete tasks or actions associated with them. Melissa Laube agreed that Chestnut Street is a high priority and also that tangible projects are important.

Mirak asked about having the funding address cleanliness and weeding in the Center as was discussed at the last meeting, such as through a dedicated employee. Rademacher said hiring a vendor would make more sense than an employee just for this. He noted that the sidewalk clearing funding could be put towards this. \$10,000 does not go very far and the clearing is already included in the budget. Mirak asked about the cost estimate for the Chestnut Street project. Amstutz explained they have a price from a consultant to design the project and do additional work. The \$50,000 funding would likely go towards construction. He also noted that the beautification items Mirak has mentioned would fit better under the public space improvements line for the Russell Common Lot. The committee continued to discuss public space improvements in the Center. It was also noted that the \$45,000 for sidewalk repair may be

able to cover the sidewalks discussed next to Whittemore Park. Mirak asked about the proposed location for the Bluebikes station in the Railroad Lot. Amstutz noted the goal would be to keep the station in the Railroad Lot but put it up on a curb extension to keep it permanently there so it would not need to be moved in the winter. The committee discussed the type of projects and how much they would be funded to be flexible so items that cost less could put extra money towards other items, like public space improvements. Amstutz updated his presentation to reflect the discussion at the meeting, including adding details under the public space improvements, increasing that amount to \$65,000, deleting the snow clearance, and taking \$5,000 off the sidewalk improvements line item. Marshall asked about the order of importance. Amstutz said the general order presented – seasonal plantings, Chestnut Street, public space improvements, sidewalk repairs, and Bluebikes station relocation – makes sense in his opinion.

Mirak asked if it was appropriate for the committee to put funding on the Chestnut Street project in regards to public safety. John Hurd responded that the Select Board has received frequent comments about Chestnut Street at their meetings from elderly residents who live in the area that this was very important to allow them to access the Center. He noted that it definitely relates to the patronage of the businesses in Arlington Center.

Mirak moved to recommend the proposed projects for FY2023 as amended to the Finance Committee. Rademacher seconded the motion. The PAC voted unanimously to recommend the proposed projects as amended.

**5. Treasurer's Office updates on meter revenues and PBD financial information.**

Phyllis Marshall noted that meter revenues collected through December 2021 are about \$153,200. This is more than what was collected in 2020 but less than was hoped. She projects that they will get to \$325,000 in revenues this year. Costs for maintenance and operations is projected at \$311,400. Another \$30,000 has been budgeted for PBD projects for FY2022, leaving a gap of about \$16,000 that can be filled by funds carried over from prior years. The fund had \$472,723 at the beginning of this fiscal year. Assuming that the projections hold, the fund will be reduced to \$456,000 because of using the fund to cover the gap above. Maintenance and operations costs should be less for next year which partly has to do with how we will upgrade the meter modems. A recommendation is forthcoming on the meter modems. Based on what was voted today, it is likely that we will need to use about \$133,000 from the prior balance to pay for FY2023 PBD projects, leaving about \$322,000. The presence of COVID-19 is still creating significant

uncertainties about future revenues. If we get about \$325,000 in revenue this year it will be much better than the last fiscal year but still not up to the level of FY2020 (2019-2020), which was over \$400,000. Amstutz noted he can share a spreadsheet with this information after the meeting.

**6. Broadway Plaza Construction Update.**

Rademacher noted the pipe work should be done by late spring and the restoration of the Plaza will begin after that. This is all weather-dependent.

**7. Set next committee meeting date and time.**

Meeting members agreed to hold the next meeting on Wednesday, March 2, at 1 pm. Amstutz said he will send a follow up email about the meeting date.

**8. Any other business.**

None.

**9. Adjourn.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.